



Dear Residents:

In an emergency, preparation means everything. As we look ahead to the Year 2000 and the severe weather season, your government is working hard to ensure that critical services are maintained. Our Y2K preparations are right on schedule, and we have backup plans in place for every conceivable situation. You may not experience any Y2K problems, but a severe thunderstorm, blizzard, or other emergencies can temporarily interrupt services at any time.

As always, it's a good idea to make common sense preparations. This Home Guide will help you prepare your home and your family for most local emergency situations. I hope you find it helpful, and I appreciate the opportunity to serve you.

*Anthony A. Williams*

Anthony A. Williams  
Mayor

Washington, D.C.

# Home Guide To Emergency Preparedness

## Preparing a Plan for Emergency Events and Y2K



## Y2K Planning

A series of community meetings and workshops are scheduled throughout the District of Columbia to help residents and businesses plan for potential Y2K emergencies. For locations, dates and times, visit the District Y2K website at [www.y2k.dcgov.org](http://www.y2k.dcgov.org), or call the D.C. Call Center at (202) 727-1000.

In addition, the D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department offers Free Home Fire Safety Inspections. To schedule a free inspection, call (202) 673-3331.

## Preparing Your Home for an Emergency

Planning for any emergency requires considering everything that could happen when things that you rely on daily — like electricity, water, heat, air conditioning, telephone service and transportation — are interrupted or lost for a considerable amount of time. Consequently, you should plan on having food, water and other essentials to get you through the emergency. Most emergency management planners suggest having enough supplies to last you and your family for three to five days for weather-related events. However, many things may impact your decision, including storage space, special needs, number of people in the household and available resources.

## Your Emergency Preparedness Kit

The six basic items that should be stored in your home are water, food, first-aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools, emergency supplies and specialty items. Keep these items in one easy-to-carry container such as a trash can, camping backpack or duffel bag. Store it in a convenient place and put a smaller version in your car. Keep items in airtight plastic bags. Remember to change the stored water and rotate the food supplies every six months (place dates on containers). Check the supplies and re-think your needs every year. Consult your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription

medications, and maintain a list of your prescription needs.

### Water

Store water in plastic containers or purchase bottled water, avoiding containers that will break, such as glass bottles. Plan for one gallon of water per person per day. Water should be stored in a cool, dark place with the date labeled on the container.

### Food

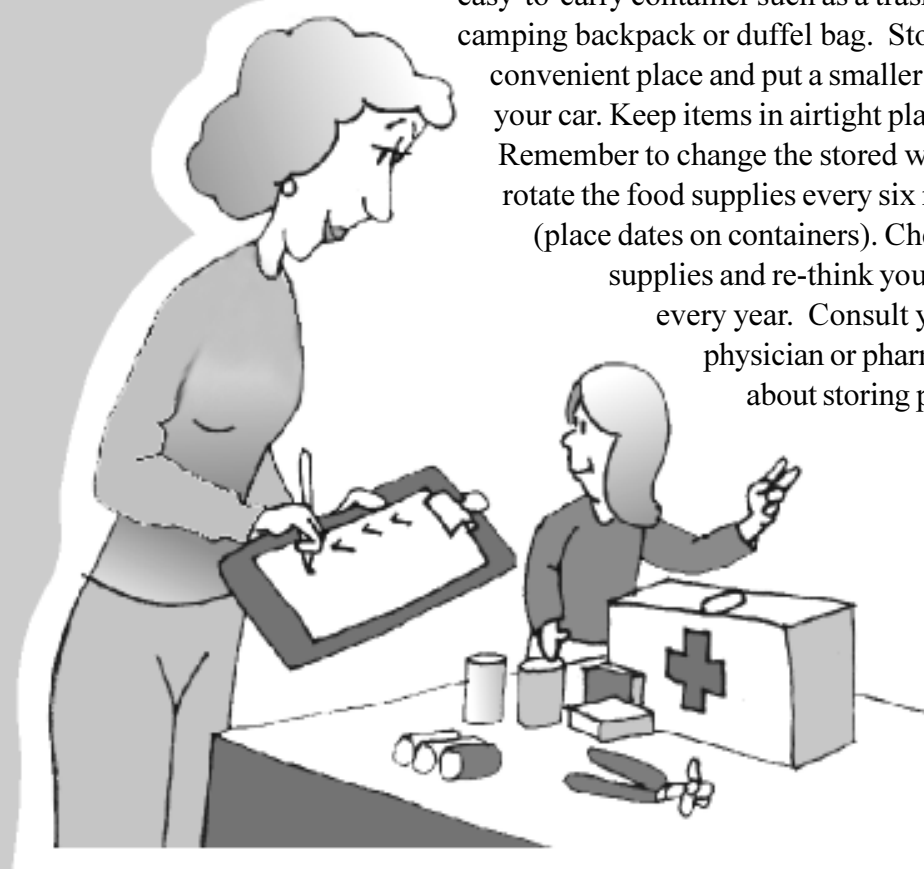
Store a supply of three to five days worth of nonperishable food per person. Foods should require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking and little or no water. Examples include: ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables; canned or boxed juices, milk and soup; condiments such as sugar, salt and pepper; high-energy food like peanut butter, jelly, low-sodium crackers, granola bars and trail mix; vitamins; foods for infants or persons on special diets; cookies, hard candy, instant coffee and sweetened cereals. Bulk food items such as wheat, powdered milk, corn and soybeans can be stored for long periods of time. Be sure to store in insect and rodent-resistant containers.

### First-Aid Kit

Assemble a first-aid kit for your home and each vehicle. Items should include sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes, gauze pads, hypoallergenic adhesive tape, triangular bandages, sterile roller bandages, scissors, tweezers, needle, moistened towelettes, antiseptic, thermometer, tongue blades, tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant, safety pins, cleansing soap, latex gloves, and sunscreen. Other items include aspirin, anti-diarrhea medication, Syrup of Ipecac, activated charcoal (for poisoning) and laxatives.

### Tools and Supplies

Keep the following items handy for all-around use: extra batteries of assorted sizes (check shelf life before purchasing), mess kits or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils, battery-operated radio, flashlight, carbon monoxide and smoke detectors, cash (include change) and/or traveler's checks, non-electric can opener and utility knife, small ABC fire extinguisher, tube



tent, pliers, adjustable wrench, compass, waterproof matches, plastic storage containers, signal flares, paper and pencil, needles and thread, medicine dropper, whistle, plastic sheeting and local map. For sanitation, pack toilet paper, soap and liquid detergent, feminine supplies, plastic garbage bags with ties, a plastic bucket and lid, disinfectant and household chlorine bleach.

### **Clothing and Bedding**

Assemble one or two complete changes of clothing per person, sturdy shoes or work boots, rain gear, blankets or sleeping bags, hat and gloves, thermal underwear and sunglasses.

### **Specialty Items**

**Babies** - formula, diapers, bottles, powdered milk and medication

**Adults** - medications, prescriptions, denture needs, eyeglasses and/or contact lenses, and related supplies

**Entertainment** – games, books and several quiet toys for children

**Important Family Documents** - wills, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, passports, stocks and bonds, immunization records, important phone numbers, credit card accounts, social security cards and other personal family records.

## **Public Emergency Shelters**

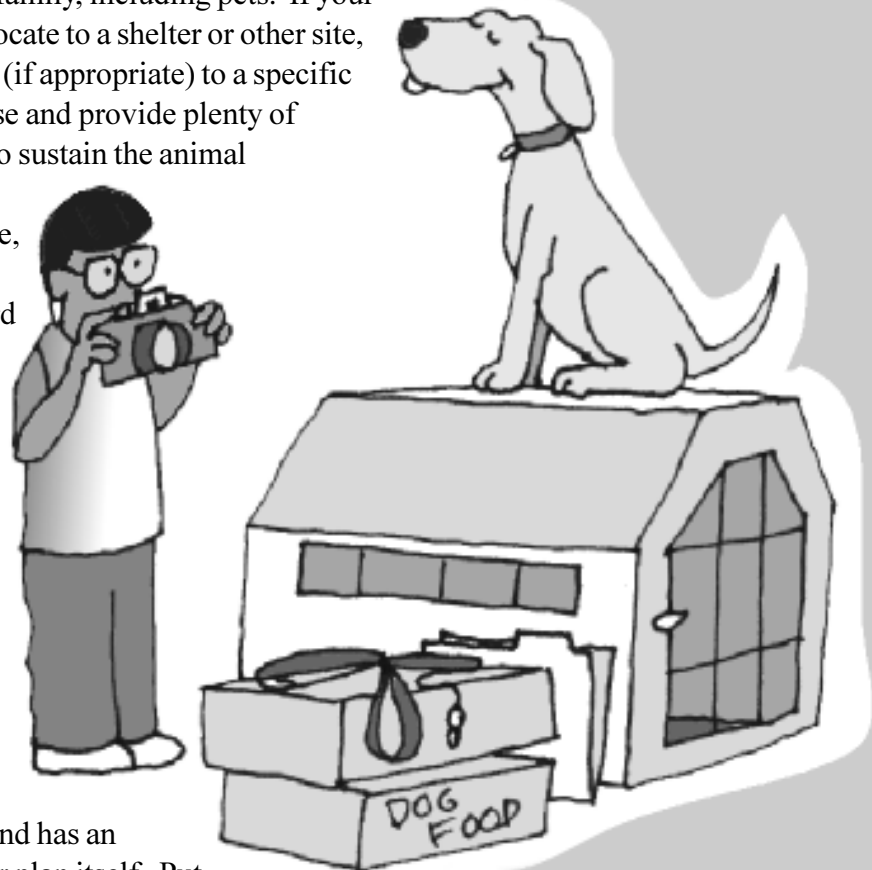
When conditions warrant, the D.C. Emergency Management Agency will establish community-based warming shelters for residents. Shelters are established in public schools, recreation centers, and other appropriate facilities where residents can sleep and eat. The D.C. Emergency Management Agency, assisted by the D.C. Department of Human Services, the D.C. Department of Health, the D.C. Chapter of the American Red Cross, and the D.C. Public Schools staffs and operates the shelters. Persons needing shelter are asked to bring clothing, bathing and sanitary supplies, pre-filled prescription and other medical needs, denture and eye care materials, and special dietary supplies of requirements. With the exception of guide dogs, pets are not permitted in the shelters.

## **Pets in Emergencies**

Emergency planning should include all members of the family, including pets. If your family must re-locate to a shelter or other site, confine your pet (if appropriate) to a specific room in the house and provide plenty of food and water to sustain the animal while you are away. If possible, arrange for someone to board the animal, or locate a relative or friend who can check on its well-being on a regular basis. If you place a dog or cat in a kennel, make sure that the facility meets all requirements for long-term care and has an adequate disaster plan itself. Put together a basic disaster kit for your pets, in case you must leave your residence quickly. Recommended items would include:

- ◆ An airline-approved carrier for each dog, cat or other pets, with ID, photo, vaccination records, registrations, special needs list, sufficient medicines and a muzzle/leash.
- ◆ An extra supply of pet food (for dogs a lower protein dog formula will produce less stool, a benefit when kept indoors).
- ◆ Plenty of clean water.
- ◆ Bowls (disposable containers if you must leave your residence), can opener, kitchen trash bags, bleach (disinfectant and water purification), blankets, towels, paper towels, and other waste disposal supplies.

For more information on emergency preparedness for pets, call the Humane Society of the United States at (202) 452-1100.



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# What To Do When Electrical Power is Interrupted

Interruption of electrical service can occur as a result of many things, including lightning, high winds, ice and heavy snow, and equipment failure. For the most part, service is normally restored within a short period. However, major power outages can happen for extended periods from time to time. When power is lost, you should:

- ◆ **Check to see if your neighbors have power.** It may be only in your home, a blown fuse or a tripped circuit. If your neighbors are also without service, call your local power company (see phone numbers). If you must go outside to assess the situation, take a flashlight and watch for downed power lines that could still be energized. If downed lines are located, don't go near them or touch anything that they may be in contact with. Report downed power lines immediately.
- ◆ **Turn off all major appliances.** Leave just a couple of light switches on in the home and the front porch light. When major appliances – refrigerators, electric water heaters, air conditioners and pumps – are left on, they could overload electric lines when power is restored causing a second outage.

- ◆ **Keep refrigerators and freezer doors closed.** Food can be kept cold enough for a day or two, if the doors are kept closed. During the winter, you may be able to store some items outside in a proper container. If temperatures are below freezing, it's possible to freeze water outside in containers and place them inside your refrigerator to help keep food cold. Try to consume perishable foods first. Some partially frozen foods can be refrozen as long as they contain ice crystals or are no warmer than 40° Fahrenheit. Consider purchasing a thermometer for both the refrigerator and freezer. Don't refreeze seafood, poultry, ice cream, cream sauces or anything susceptible to spoilage. When in doubt, throw it out.

- ◆ **Use battery-operated flashlights or lanterns** to illuminate the home. Candles and kerosene lanterns are not recommended for lighting because of the inherent fire safety hazards.

**Portable Emergency Generators** can be used to provide limited electrical power during an outage. But, take care to ensure that they do not pose a threat to you and your family. **Never fuel or run a portable generator in the home or garage, as gas-powered generators pose a serious fire and carbon monoxide threat.** Generators should be installed in compliance with your local utility's guidelines. Make sure the generator is equipped with a double-throw transfer switch that protects your equipment and prevents feedback on power lines. Always operate according to the manufacturer's instructions. For additional information on the proper use of emergency generators, call your power company.

**Water Systems with Electric Pumps** – such as wells or cisterns – will not operate when the power is out. Use alternate sources of water until power is restored.

**Gas Appliances** may not work if the electricity is off because the equipment may require electricity for ignition or valve operation.

**Water Heaters** that are drained to prevent damage from freezing must have their power circuit shut off as well. Failure to do so could result in loss of the heating element when power is restored. Never turn on a water heater unless the tank is full.

**Plumbing** can freeze when power is lost during cold weather periods. Drain pumps, supply lines, water heaters, boilers and traps in drains of tubs, sinks, commodes, washing machines and dishwashers. To avoid major flooding when temperatures rise, turn off supply lines to outside spigots.

**Life Support Equipment** required for family members who depend on these devices (respirators, ventilators, oxygen equipment or other life-sustaining devices) should be listed with the power company, with your doctor's approval. You should have a contingency plan that always includes an alternate power source for the device and relocating the person.

**Trees** are a primary cause of power outages in the District of Columbia. While power companies have a regularly scheduled program for trimming trees away from powerlines, they do not go on private property. Consider this when planning and/or trimming trees on your property, always seek professional help in trimming limbs or branches that are close to power lines.

## Keeping Warm in Your Home

Select a single room in the home in which the entire family can live – ideally a room which gets sunlight during daylight hours. Use fireplaces and wood-burning stoves with care, and always supervise them when burning. Make sure the fireplace is in proper working condition and has been inspected before use. Wear layers of clothing, including sweaters and coats, which hold warm air and help to maintain body heat for longer periods. For

homes with natural gas heaters, keep meters and vents clear of ice and snow.

## Keeping Updated On an Emergency

Getting information during an emergency situation is vital. Radio and television stations provide the quickest means to obtain information. If you have electrical power and cable television, turn to the D.C. Government cable channels, 13 and 16 for frequent updates. Have a battery-operated radio tuned to a local all-news or talk-radio station. For the District of Columbia the following stations are designated Emergency Alerting System (EAS) radio stations: WTOP (1500 AM); WMAL (630 AM); WRC (570 AM); and WKYS (93.9 FM). Consider purchasing a battery-operated weather alert radio.

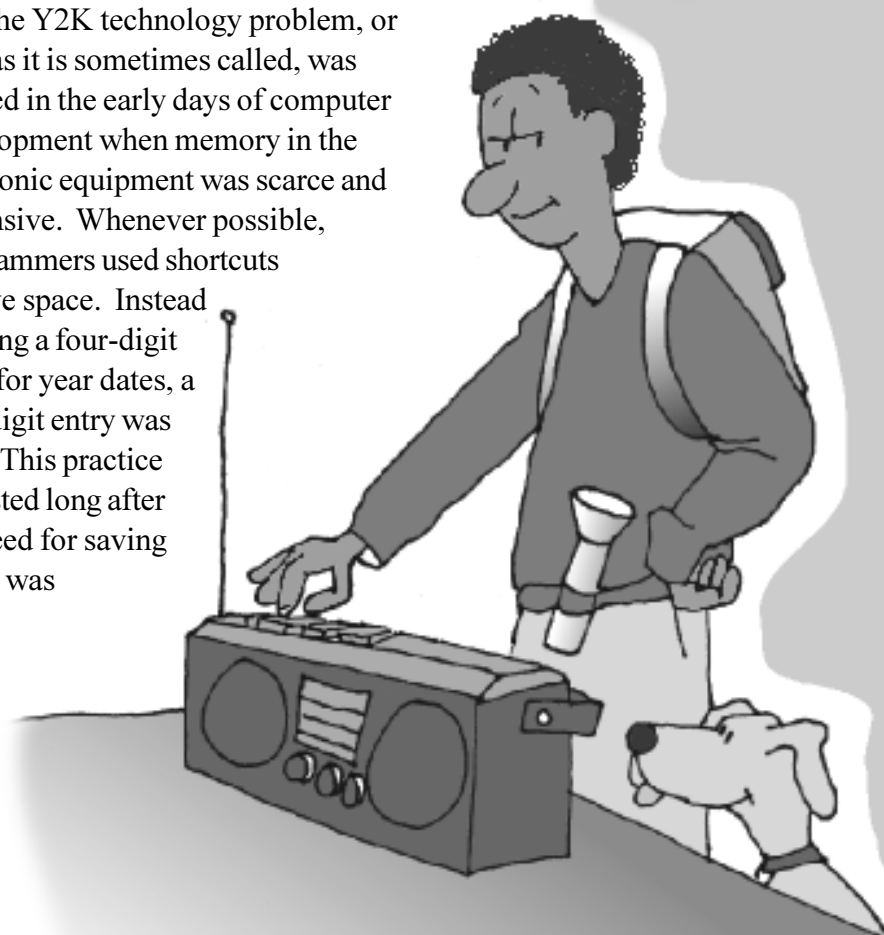
## Year 2000

*...contingency planning is a must*

The Y2K technology problem, or bug, as it is sometimes called, was created in the early days of computer development when memory in the electronic equipment was scarce and expensive. Whenever possible, programmers used shortcuts to save space. Instead of using a four-digit code for year dates, a two-digit entry was used. This practice persisted long after the need for saving space was

## Safety Note

Never use gas ovens or stovetops to heat homes; also charcoal or propane grill should not be used inside the home. They pose a serious threat of fire and creation of poisonous carbon monoxide. Kerosene heaters should always be used in a well-ventilated room and never refueled inside the home or in an attached garage. When removing ashes from the fireplace, make sure that the ashes have been cooled, and are placed in a metal container outside and away from the home.





## Be a Good Neighbor...

Remember -- property owners are responsible for keeping the sidewalk in front of their property clean. Be a good neighbor and keep the sidewalk free of snow, ice, or other obstructions.

eliminated. The two-digit code also was used in embedded chips which exist in many devices that control processes, functions, (like cars), building ventilation systems and elevators.

In short, if any computer program includes time-sensitive calculations or comparisons, results are unpredictable. No one knows what problems may occur, how widespread they may be, or how long they will last.

The good news is that the federal government, and the District of Columbia are addressing the problem. Utility companies, financial institutions, retail businesses, and many other commercial establishments also are acting to prevent problems.

For information on what the District of Columbia is doing to prepare for the century date change please call the D.C. Call Center at (202)727-1000 or visit the District's Y2K website at [www.y2k.dcgov.org](http://www.y2k.dcgov.org)

## Y2K Planning At Home

Individuals and families should make a list of all electrical appliances that are date sensitive, such as computers, televisions and VCR's, microwave ovens, digital alarm clocks, fax machines, pagers, cell phones and computerized systems in vehicles. It's important to point out that not all electronic items that display or use dates for various functions will fail to work properly on Jan. 1, 2000, and thereafter. However, check with the manufacturer to determine if the appliance is Y2K compliant, especially if it's more than five years old. If not, ask what can be done — if anything — to prevent or minimize failure.

If you are planning to purchase new electronic equipment before January 1, make sure that it has been Y2K certified and tested before leaving the store.

## Y2K Planning At Work

Ask your employer what preparations are in place for the Year 2000 rollover. Have computer systems, software, and embedded microprocessors been fully tested? Will they properly handle the century date change?

Have all critical suppliers been contacted, and are they ready to provide those critical supplies after the Year 2000 rollover?

Answers to questions such as these will help you and your employer better prepare for the date changeover. Regardless, every business should have a Business Continuity and Contingency Operating Plan, which assumes that there may be computer and embedded chip glitches. These plans provide a road map for ways to get around problems, should they occur. Finally, inquire if your company has a policy in place regarding your status as an employee should disruptions result in temporary closing of your employer's business.



## Financial and Personal Records

Keep all your financial records in order and up-to-date. Bank statements, credit and debit cards, investment portfolios, medical, prescription and insurance information, taxes, and other records show transactions related to your account and may be susceptible to Y2K glitches. Should a problem exist with any of these records because of a computer or software problem, your records may be the sole source for validating the correct information.

Also, consider taking some extra cash or travelers checks (preferred) in case of problems related to ATM machines and credit card verification systems.

# Your Personal Computer

A personal computer's (PC) hardware and software are vulnerable to the Year 2000 date problem. But, with some planning and attention to detail, you can protect yourself from disruption. Contact the manufacturer of your computer hardware and software for questions about Y2K compatibility.

Computer manufacturer information can also be found by checking under “vendor management” on the District’s Y2K website at [www.y2k.dcgov.org](http://www.y2k.dcgov.org).

# Travel

If you plan to travel over the New Year's Day holiday, check to see how the community you are planning to visit is prepared to deal with Y2K issues. If your plans include traveling by airplane, train or ship, inquire about the carrier's Y2K planning

efforts, including contingency plans for alternate travel means should a problem develop. Also, consider taking some extra cash or travelers checks (preferred) in case of problems related to ATM machines and credit card verifications systems. Alternative formats of this guide can be made available for persons with special needs.

## For More Information

There is plenty of good information available on the Internet regarding Y2K. A search for information will find software and technical information, as well as information on what governments and businesses are doing to “fix” the date problem. In addition, the President’s Council on Year 2000 can be reached at 1-888-USA-4-Y2K, or on the internet at [www.y2k.gov](http://www.y2k.gov)

The District of Columbia offers a variety of information and links on its Y2K web site at [www.y2k.dcgov.org](http://www.y2k.dcgov.org) (where a copy of this guide is also available).

For more information about the District of Columbia, watch Cable channels 13 or 16 or visit the District's home page on the Internet at [www.ci.washington.dc.us](http://www.ci.washington.dc.us).

Additional copies of this publication are available in D.C. public libraries, or by calling (202) 727-1000. A spanish version of this guide is also available.

# Planning Notes for Your Home

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## Year 2000 Readiness Disclosure

**This information is provided as a public service for the citizens, leaders of business, local government, educational institutions and other organizations in the District of Columbia. Although all reasonable efforts have been made to present accurate information, no guarantees, including expressed or implied warranties, are made with respect to this information by the District of Columbia, its Departments or Agencies, directors, employees or agents, who also assume no legal responsibility for the accuracy of presentations, comments or other information in this publication. In addition, no liability is assumed and all liability is expressly declined.**

## Check on Relatives and Neighbors

During storms and other emergency events, check to see how your relatives and neighbors are coping, especially senior citizens and persons with disabilities. If possible, consider helping them plan or locate resources from which to obtain assistance. In non-emergencies, The District of Columbia Office on Aging can be reached at (202) 724-5622. For help for senior citizens in an emergency, call "Answers, Please" at (202) INFO-211 (463-6211).



## Important Phone Numbers

**Emergencies  
(Fire/Ambulance, Police)  
911**

**Non-emergency  
Police (202) 727-1010  
Fire (202) 462-1762**

**American Red Cross, D.C. Chapter  
(202) 728-6401**

**"Answers, Please"  
(Social Service referrals)  
(202) INFO-211 (463-6211)**

**Bell Atlantic  
(800) 275-2355**

**District of Columbia Call Center  
(202) 727-1000**

**D.C. Emergency  
Management Agency  
(202) 727-6161**

**D.C. Department of Public Works  
(202) 939-8000**

**PEPCO  
(202) 833-7500**

**Poison Center  
(202) 625-3333**

**Washington Gas  
(800) 752-7520**

**D.C. Water and Sewer Authority  
(202) 673-6600**

*Additional funding provided by:*

***PEPCO***

Special thanks to Montgomery County, Maryland and its partners for their generous contribution of the content and format of this guide.